

CHAPTER XLIV.

KING KAMMEHAMMA, or Kamme, as he is familiarly called, is the third of his race: his ancestors were fierce, ungovernable gentlemen, who, in the good old times, clubbed and killed—perhaps ate, too—nobody knows—a great number of their enemies; but without tracing the historic truth of these remote events, it is only necessary to state, that his present majesty has been invested with the purple, and is, to all formal appearances, the chief potentate of the islands.

The government is a complicated piece of political machinery, with a constitution, and masses of subtle laws, equal in magnitude to the huge proportions of a Chinese dictionary. There is a Legislative Assembly of Kanakas, Ministers of State, War, Finance, Solicitors-general, an army, a navy, and a court! This is not half, but it makes one dizzy to think of it all at once: however, on due reflection, it is not quite so complicated an affair after all! The government is simplified by two bosom friends of the King—Mr. Robert Crichton Wyllie, Minister of foreign relations; and Mr. G. P. Judd, Minister of finance. The former is a very clever Scotch gentleman, somewhat inflated with the royal trust reposed in him, and has, moreover, the *cathoethes scribendi* to a most melancholy and voluminous extent; yet he is an agreeable person, and gives good dinners, and I have not the heart to say a

syllable to his disparagement, although I have not had the felicity of testing his cuisine!

But Mr. Judd is the Magnus Apollo of the Island. Kamme, or the Lonely One—as the word signifies—is his puppet, and most particularly lonely he keeps him! The King is Punch, and Judd is Judy, and the Lonely One is jumped about and thumped, and the wires are pulled unremittingly. Judd is his prime counselor, his parliament, father confessor and ghostly adviser—his temperance lecturer, purse-bearer, and factotum generally. There was a rumor, too, in courtly circles, that an order of nobility was to be established, and then we shall have, probably, Baron Judd, Peer of the Realm and Regent of the Kingdom. One would naturally suppose that a staunch democrat from the Model Republic could not bear the tainted air of a monarchical court in his republican nostrils. But it is wonderful how soon we learn to estimate patriotism at so much per annum, and with what suppleness we can kneel before a throne, if there be dollars hidden beneath the dais. What boots it whether the chair be filled with African or white? We want dollars!

The king was universally liked by the foreigners; for he has, indeed, for a modernized savage, much bonhomie; is a good-hearted, well-meaning person; rather given to conviviality, like all his race, and when permitted to throw off the restraints of the court, he “allows his more austere faculties to become pleasingly relaxed by a little gentle and innocent indulgence.” However, these backslidings are of rare occurrence, and when under the argus eyes of his financial adviser, he is never seen to exceed the limits of propriety—eschews ten-pins and tobacco—sips malt, and devotes his leisure to billiards.

We were to be presented at court! It occupied a number of

days to arrange certain punctilio, and finally, without any decided misunderstanding, an hour was fixed for a royal audience.

One day, precisely as the clock tolled twelve, we sallied out into the dusty streets—chapeau'd, sworded, belted, and laced up to the chin. The weather was warm, too. A few minutes walk, guided by our obliging cicerone, Mr. Wyllie, carried us to the Palace.

It is a large, square-built villa, spaciouly piazzaed and windowed, surrounded by pretty plantations of shrubbery and fruit-trees. At the gateway a guard of Kanaka infantry presented arms, the royal standard was unfurled from the flag-staff and floated to the breeze. Passing up a broad, gravelled alley, we ascended a flight of steps to the piazza, and were again saluted by a double line of officers, who were supposed to be the black rods in waiting. Entering the villa, we found ourselves in a wide hall traversing the centre of the building, with saloons to the right and left. The King not having arrived, we had leisure to inspect the reception room. It was a spacious apartment, with windows on three sides, having green Venetian blinds opening to the piazzas, and two doors leading to the hall. It was handsomely carpeted, and the furniture consisted of a few plain mahogany chairs, with another of state, surmounted by a crown. A round table stood in the centre, supporting alabaster ornaments, volumes of Wilkes' Exploring Expedition, and a richly-bound Bible in the native dialect, presented by that estimable philanthropist, Elizabeth Fry. The walls were hung with portraits of the Lonely One's family—dingy chiefs and their ladies, smiling intensely, with round saucer eyes and thick lips—a painting of Blucher—two of the Kings of Prussia—and facing the throne, in a gorgeously gilt and carved frame, the King of the French;

which two last, by a singular coincidence, had lately been presented in great state and procession by the respective consuls, on the very days their several majesties had been dethroned!

Time was only allowed us to take a rapid glance around the saloon, when the approach of majesty was announced, and we hurried back to the hall.

From the opposite side of the terrace appeared the regal cortège—brilliant in embroidery, gold lace, nodding plumes, and swords at their sides: on they came, two abreast—foremost, the King with the Minister of Finance—then a brace of Chamberlains, followed by the High Chiefs and officers of state, and the procession closed by the two young princes, Alexander and Lot.

In a few moments, his excellency the Minister of Foreign Relations imparted the august intelligence of all being prepared for our reception. Forming in line—the Admiral leading, under pilotage of Mr. Wyllie—we entered the saloon, and approached the throne. The King was standing, and the courtiers ranged on either side. Our Admiral backed his topsails and let go an anchor on the Lonely One's port beam: we were then telegraphed by name—shot ahead—hove to abreast His Majesty—exchanged signals—filled away and took position by order of sailing on the starboard bow!

His excellency the Minister of Finance—who, by the way, was not an ill-looking nobleman—in full court costume, and a field-marshal's chapeau tucked under his arm—announced to the Admiral that His Majesty would deign to lend a willing ear to any observations upon religion, war, politics, or any other topics most agreeable. Whereupon, the Admiral having a few remarks all ready prepared in his pocket, proceeded to dilate on the happiness he felt in being thus honored—spoke of the extraordinary beauty

of the Islands—touched upon usefulness of missionaries, and ended by expressing solicitude for His Majesty's welfare and dynasty.

This speech was immediately translated by the courtly Judd, who, with admirable foresight, had provided himself beforehand with a copy. Thereupon he handed the King a reply, who began in much the same strain as the Admiral, and concluded by hinting that he hoped his dynasty *would* last a long time!

The business being now happily arranged, His Majesty and the Admiral became seated, and the rest of us were permitted to mingle freely with the Kanaka court.

Kammehamma, and all his native attendants, had handsome, agreeable faces, and were extremely well made. The Premier, John Young, a half-breed, would be recognized for an elegant person in any part of the world. Two were of just and colossal proportions—one, the High Chief Parkee, the greatest Chamberlain probably in the world—for he weighs nearly four hundred pounds: I forget the precise number of chairs he crushes annually, but it is something enormous, and he is the terror of all housekeepers.

The King, Premier and Judd, had broad red ribbons thrown baldric fashion over breast and shoulders, of such extreme breadth as to give the idea of the wearers having burst their jugular arteries.

Whilst intently occupied regarding this brilliant throng, I happened to attract the attention of an intelligent copper youth, some twenty years old, who spoke English perfectly well, and who in fact patronised me with great politeness and suavity of demeanor; and well he might, for he was Prince of the blood royal, and could afford it. There chanced to be a fine engraving of Queen Victoria and infant family, in the hall. "This," said His Highness, pointing with marked emphasis to the little Prince of Wales,

"this is the heir to the British throne!" Ah! thought I, forgive me, but you occupy the same elevated position in the Hawaiian dynasty! My conjecture was well founded.

By some means the succession of late had been changed. And, by the way, it is a wise institution they have, of continuing the descent from the female branch. The war-club, feathers, and other regalia, were to have fallen upon the brows of one Prince Moses; but Moses was suspected of being too pointed in his attentions to the Queen consort herself—scandal perhaps—although there could be no question about the sad havoc he committed in the hearts of the youthful *wyheenees* of the Royal Academy! Ah! wicked Moses! His excellency the Financial Minister, fearing future inroads upon the peace of families, had the gay Lothario banished to a remote and desolate district of the Island, and the succession transferred to a brother—the youth who evinced so much complaisance towards me.

We remained a full hour, and then made our adieus, "the interview having passed," according to the Court Journal, "much to the satisfaction of all parties."

For my own part I was excessively diverted with the raree-show, and thought it highly ridiculous. What greater folly can exist than aping the forms and etiquette of an European court? If, as is contended, the natives are not sufficiently advanced in civilization for free government, it is by no means imperative to set up a tinsel puppet, to dazzle the eyes of a few half-naked savages; for surely no intelligent person can be so blind an owl as not to detect and despise the cheat. These vain-glorious ceremonies and pretensions are also, in a certain degree, the cause of embroiling the Hawaiian Government with other nations, whose consuls or diplomatic agents complain of bad treatment;

but in all the bullying or advice volunteered, incident upon their indiscretions, there has been none so sensible, and so plainly given, as the letter of an English Admiral to the King, consequent upon outrages committed upon a British subject in 1846. Outcries are raised, too, in these cases, by individuals who have renounced their own country and sworn allegiance to a new native master, about the oppression of American citizens.

One may forgive the absurdity attending these proceedings in a Scotchman, but it is inexcusable in a Yankee. Still many measures emanating from these sagacious councillors are characterised by a careful regard to the interests of the native population. But then there are other laws, which have not the ground of expediency to uphold them, wherein strangers are incapacitated from becoming owners of landed property without swearing fealty to the Hawaiian King! As a consequence, the greater portion of tillable ground is held by the chief, who has neither the sense nor energy to direct the steps for a proper development of the soil. The lower order are the occupants, who themselves are not eligible to a free tenure, and at least one-half, or two-thirds the benefits of their labor is taken in some way by the proprietors. Thus, without an incentive to greater efforts the country languishes under the same species of feudal tyranny and extortion, as in the days of their cannibal forefathers! The islands are rich and fertile; sugar, coffee, and tobacco flourish luxuriantly; and under any other system than the present, there could be no bounds placed upon the advantages and wealth that would follow. Yet, although this policy, which destroys the energies and resources of the group, is in the greatest degree narrow-minded and illiberal, still it is the only course that will sustain the wise statesman who framed it; for their Excellencies are much too

shrewd not to perceive, with prophetic vision, that the very moment the lands are thrown open to foreign enterprise and competition, a preponderating influence will be acquired by the wealth and intelligence of foreigners themselves, the lands will slip like water through the hands of the chiefs; and not only will the Lonely One be called upon to throw off the Imperial tappa, but the royal ministers, also, will be required to resign the purse-strings and portfolios, and betake themselves to the retirements of simple citizenship.

It is blameable, too, to pamper these semi-tutored island potentates with such highly-seasoned dainties, when in a few years, or may be months, they may be obliged to descend to native life, and without the interest attached to martyrs or Eastern princes we read of, be made a laughing-stock to their former subjects. As things remain, the entire institution of puppet-king, complex government, and scheming advisers, is at best but an indifferent piece of charlatanism and deception.

Nevertheless we were distressed at the thoughts of leaving these lovely islands, for we had become deeply imbued with the rage for realizing rapid fortunes, in the culture of sugar and coffee. Indeed, some of our party were so thoroughly bitten, as to enter into negotiations with prime ministers, and other great people, wherein special royal ordinances were to grant certain titles, with many advantageous exemptions; and we spoke seriously of importing machinery, Malays, Chinese, and of other operations; until at last we began to fancy ourselves doomed to pass the remainder of our lives among the kanakas.

CHAPTER XLV.

WE were forty days at the Sandwich Islands, and on the 21st of September weighed anchor, and sailed away from the fertile vales of Oahu. Passing along the western shores of the group, we steered to the southward, until the trade winds carried us within a few hundred miles of the equator; where meeting, between the parallels of seven and ten, a strong easterly current, reacting from the north-eastern trades, we were swept three hundred miles to the eastward.

During this period we had light, variable winds, attended by a confused, uneasy sea, and one continual series of rains. The like was never seen; it poured in torrents for seventeen days; the tar of the standing rigging appeared white-washed; sails wet, chafed, and torn; decks sodden and spongy, and the heat below oppressive.

One night, as usual, the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain came down, beyond all ancient similes. I was wet to the bones, and am convinced they too were damp; the heavy canvas was slamming and beating against the masts and tops, with a noise like the report of cannon, whenever the ship gave a quick lurch, giving the idea of flying out of the bolt ropes; indeed I wished they would, for the yards had been braced every way to woo the fitful breezes, which only for a moment would fill the leaden sails, and then hop around to another quarter. The night

was black as Erebus! except when the lightning flashed out in a blinding glare, with a pale, blueish dazzle, like to the flash of a gun, or a burning blue light; illuminating the mazes of rigging, lofty spars, and clusters of the watch, crouching under partial shelter of the hammock-nettings;—then all was dark again. I was standing on the poop, up to my ankles in water, although feeling as if swimming; a little old quarter-master directing the helmsman was at my elbow—I could not see, but I felt him,—he too was at times trying to feel the white feathery dog vane, to know where the wind was! It was old Harry Greenfield! None of your low-crowned, flowing-ribbon'd, wide-trouser'd dandy Jacks, pricked all over with china-ink, like a savage; but a short, stout, wholesome little “tar of all weathers,” with a pleasant, rosy, good-humored visage, bronzed and wilted to be sure, and rather mouldy about the head, for he had “served his full time in a man-of-war ship”—nearly half a century—and no doubt had taught many a sucking reefer, and given excellent advice to lots of sapient lieutenants—I know he has to me often; in a word, to complete his portrait, he was the image of Durand's Santa Claus! “Well,” said I, “old gentleman, how are you to-night?” “Dry as dust, sir.” “What! I thought you wet!” “Fat!” said he, misunderstanding me, “what on—salt junk? You might carry a lump of it from here to Jerusalem, and not get enough fat to grease the pint of a sail-needle.” “No! wet I say.” “Ah! yes, sir! You're right, my hands and feet are shrunk up like a washerwoman's thumb, but I meant *inside*, sir.” “Well, here's the key of the locker, go down and take a glass of grog, but mind you allow for variation.” “Aye, aye, sir—no higher nor nor-west.” Presently he came splashing back to his old stand. “Mr. Blank, I don't see any shells, tappa, and them

sorts of curiosities stowed away in your state-room." "What of that?" "Presents to your friends, sir?" "Oh, no, I heard of a witty lady, who had a nautical lover constantly sending her navy trash, that she had it all packed in the attic to prevent the drawing-rooms being taken for a sailor boarding-house." "Sensible woman, that," chuckled old Harry; "you may buy the same things for half the money in Water-street, besides hubble bubbles made in Hamburgh." The rain came down with renewed violence, if possible, and I became so completely saturated, and water-logged, as to be on the point of requesting a couple of stout top-men to take me by head and heels and wring me comparatively dry, when our confab was interrupted by a sharp squall; but just as the frigate began to move lively through the water, the wind died quietly away, the topsails flapped against the masts, and all became dark and rainy as before. Could a saint help anathematising such weather? "It's unpleasant business this going to sea," chimed in old Santa Claus, deprecating my wrath against the unfeeling elements; "you ought to try a smoker, I did once." "You did?" said I, incredulously. "Yes, sir, I was paid off from a merchantman in Orleans, and took passage in one of them smokers, bigger than a three-decker."

"But tell me, my old sea dog, why don't you leave the broad ocean, and settle down quietly on shore?" "Why, sir, I can't afford it!" "No! well, let me hear your ideas of life!" Moving close to my side, while the light from the binnacle flashed upon his pleasant face and dripping garments, he took a reflecting glance at the compass and then began: "D'ye see, sir, I want a country seat—with a nice sail-boat. I'd get up early, and take a good sniffer of brandy, with a dash of peppermint; then I'd go

somewhere or another and take breakfast—call for me horse, and ride away eight or ten miles in the country—(he looked like a horseman!)—when I'd get half slewed, and come to town and visit the ladies—." Here he appeared palled. "Go on," I said. "Then, sir, I'd take a glass of old Madeira—with an egg in it—every half hour—until bed-time, mind ye—when, with another sniffer"—

"Eight bells!" sung out the orderly at the cabin doors. The watch was called to take their accustomed drenching, and I went below, without hearing the conclusion of old Greenfield's yarn.

This weather, caused probably by the Equinox, lasted until the 11th of October, when the winds sprang from the South, blew away the wet clouds, and carried the ship to a longitude of 128° in 5° North latitude, when the breeze gradually veered to the Eastward, and we crossed the Equator. On the morning of the 26th we discovered the easternmost Islands of the Marquesas—passed Hood's Island, and the following day anchored in Nukeheva—the Anna Maria bay of Mr. Gouch—Surveyor of the *Daedalus*, one of Vancouver's squadron—who, in ignorance of the previous discovery by the Spaniards under Alvaro de Mendaña, had named the group after his commander, Hergest.